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THE LONDON FUR-TRADE.

In how practical a manner London is the centre of the world is in nothing more strikingly shown than in the great Fur-trade. From the remotest recesses of the earth—from the bleakest and dismalest corners of the Arctic and Antarctic regions—as well as from the steppes of Tartary, the prairies of North America, the mountains of Asia, and the Bush of Australia—the lowliest as well as the costliest skins are transported with all speed to England. It is not that England 'consumes' (in an economic sense) all these costly coverings; but for various reasons, which shall be explained. A little inquiry into the subject will be of interest at a time when the great question of the fur-seal fishing in the Northern Pacific is attracting so much attention both in Europe and America.

In former articles we have described the homes and haunts of the fur-seal, and also the method of trade in this particular skin, so we shall not pause now over this part of the fur-supply. A word as to the catch, however, is necessary in relation to our subject. Last year, according to the official Report, fifty-six vessels sailed from British Columbia for the sealing-grounds, and the total of skins taken by them was stated at 76,875. This is said to have been the largest catch ever made by the pelagic, or open-sea, sealers. But besides that, some 43,366 skins were brought into San Francisco from the Pribylov Islands (of which the Alaska Commercial Company have the exclusive monopoly) and by the Russian Sealskin Company. Owing to the new agreement with the United States, in consequence of the Paris arbitration and award, many of the Canadian sealers have this year crossed over to the coasts of Japan, but what success they meet with there will not be known for some time. The largest catch ever made by a single Canadian sealing-schooner is said to have been 2772 skins.

But although the seal-skin is one of the most familiar of furs, both in commerce and in common life, it is very far from being the most valuable that enters the London market, at which we shall now take a look.

That market is practically constituted by some half-dozen experienced and well-known skin-brokers; and probably about three-fourths of the fur business done in London passes through the hands of one great firm of brokers, and of the Hudson's Bay Company. All the sales take place by auction in the brokers' sale-rooms in the City four times a year—namely, in January, March, June, and October—and the turn-over approaches four millions sterling per annum. In no part of the world can be seen gathered together such a varied and valuable collection of skins as at these quarterly sales in London. And curious it is to think that the most of them are brought there from all parts of the world just to be sold and distributed to all parts of the world again.

Why is this? Well, in the first place, London is the centre of finance and credit; furs run into a great deal of money, and the catching of them takes up a great deal of time; therefore, the hunters and traders naturally seek the outlet which is most ready and most certain. The fur-agent can draw bills on London against his costly bales as fast as he can ship them. Then another reason is, that English furriers have acquired a dexterity in handling and dyeing furs beyond that of any other country; even American skins caught in American vessels or on American shores, intended for clothing American bodies, are sent over here to be prepared, only a very few being treated in the States. A third reason is, that our appliances for receiving, sorting, handling, dressing, and selling skins are on an incomparably more extensive scale than anywhere else. And a fourth reason is, that to London come all the capitalists of the world for investments, and the wealthy for luxuries.

There is no other fur-market in the world with which to compare that of London. At Irbit, on the other side of the Ural Mountains,

there is an annual Fur fair; but the skins sold are only the more ordinary sorts of Russian skins for domestic consumption. At the Fair of Nijni-Novgorod, in August, and at the Easter Fair at Leipsic, furs occupy an important though not an exclusive place. These three Fairs, indeed, only help in the general work of distribution which begins with the fall of the broker's hammer in the London salerooms. There, Russian, Greek, French, German, and Austrian dealers attend quarter after quarter, to finger, appraise, and bid for the furs, which they select for their respective markets, or despatch to one or other of these great Fairs. And very clever and knowing are these fur-dealers—clever in estimating comparative value, and knowing as to the prospects of supply, the present requirements of patrons, and the probable vagaries of fashion.

For fashion does exert a considerable influence on the fur-market, as any one can understand who observes how sealskin jackets come and go in feminine favour. A most striking example occurred in the case of ermine fur. For many years this beautiful fur was quite out of favour; nobody wore it, nobody asked for it, and by-and-by the skins practically disappeared from the market. Then, a year or two ago, a demand for ermine mysteriously sprang up and began to grow. The fur-merchants, looking about for supplies, saw none coming forward, and of course the price stiffened. The Chinese, who in former years used to supply nearly all the ermine sent to London, were asked why they did not now send on skins. Their reply was, that they had long ago given up catching them because they were unsaleable when sent to market. But they set to work anew; and at the spring sales this year ten thousand skins were received, and sold at double as much as they would have brought a year ago, and probably considerably less than they will bring a year hence, if fashion keeps this skin in favour over the winter.

We have no estimate of the number of individual skins put up to auction at the quarterly sales in London; but the number must be enormous, for the catalogue of a single sale will run to several hundred pages. The spring sales, as a rule, contain the fruits of the chase of the previous summer; the summer sales, the fruits of the previous autumn catch, and so on; but many furs from remote regions may not reach the hammer for a couple of years after they were bagged. Then, again, the purchasers at the spring sales are preparing for the winter in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, while at the summer sales our own furriers begin to provide themselves. Thus must industry always be ahead of luxury.

The spring, or March, sales are the most important of the year, and at these sales will be found specimens of every fur-skin known to the naturalist or the hunter. In numbers, probably the fox-skins and bear-skins of various sorts will take the lead; and it is no uncommon thing for four or five thousand bear-skins to pass under the hammer in one saleroom. As a rule, the sales continue for a fortnight, day after day, without intermission from morning till evening.

The costliest fur that comes to market, and one that year by year is becoming more scarce, is that of the sea-otter, an animal which seems rapidly disappearing from the waters of the North Pacific. At the spring sales of the present year, one of these beautiful skins brought two hundred and ten pounds, and yet the size of it was only about six feet long by two feet wide. Even this was not the highest known price, for last year two hundred and twenty pounds was paid for a sea-otter skin of similar size, but of somewhat finer quality—such a skin, indeed, as would now probably bring two hundred and fifty pounds, so much has this fur advanced in value.

Who pays such immense prices for such small skins? Almost entirely Russian noblemen, who especially prize the sea-otter fur for the collars of their overcoats. We have heard that fifty pounds is no uncommon price for a wealthy Russian to pay for a coatcollar, and that his reason for preferring the sea-otter fur is that it does not freeze with the breath; but we are unable to vouch for the truth of either statement.

The next highest price paid at the London sales this year was one hundred and fifty pounds for one very fine specimen of a lion's skin, with head complete. This, however, was bought probably more as a curio than for garmenture; and the long-haired tiger-skins, which seem to come in in increasing supply from Northern India, are bought for floor-coverings at varying prices. Next to the sea-otter for clothing purposes, the fur of the silver-fox brings the highest price, and in this case also the Russians are the principal buyers. The silver-fox is one of the most precious denizens of the Hudson's Bay Territory, and as much as one hundred and twenty pounds has been paid for a single fine skin. The silver-fox, however, is really not silvery, and has only a few white hairs mixed with his black ones—indeed, the most highly prized skins are entirely black. The principal use of these skins is for the collars of the cloaks of Russian ladies.

The Russian sable has had a great vogue for some years, after a long period of unfashionableness, and has once again become scarce. It is possible that this very beautiful fur may be driven out of fashion once more by inferior dyed skins, that are sent to market under the name of sable. A real sable of best quality brings very nearly as much as a best quality silver-fox, taking size and price into consideration. Indeed, the value may be considered nearer that of the sea-otter, for a sable may bring from thirty-five to forty pounds, and be only about the fifth of the size of the sea-otter. But the very best sables are accounted a sort of imperial perquisite, being paid as tribute by some of the Asiatic peoples to the Czar, and therefore called 'Crown Sables.' Now and again, a parcel of these extra superfine furs reaches the London market, and is eagerly competed for by English, American, and French furriers, who know well that they are certain of a good profit for dexterous dressing.

The extreme popularity and high value of the sable-fur has induced these ingenious Asiatics, the Chinese, to attempt colourable imi-

tations. They have learned to dress up marten skins to be so like the real sable as easily to deceive all but the experienced eye. Indeed, even experts can often only detect the imposture by examining the under fur, to which no process of dyeing has been able to impart the peculiar characteristic hue of the sable. Other furs which are sold at the London sales, but not, we believe, anywhere else, are the skunk, mink, racoon, musquash, red fox, and opossum. There are many others, of course, but those which we have named are the principal objects of trade, because they come in the largest numbers, except, of course, the skin of the fur-seal, to which the October sales are almost entirely devoted. The few remaining over, or which arrive too late, are put up at the January sales along with all the other belated arrivals, or odd lots. In former years the seal-skin used to come dribbling in all through the year, so that the dealers never exactly knew how the supply stood, but now it has been arranged to concentrate the seal-skin sales each year in October. Four years ago, owing to disputes about the Behring Sea fishing, the price rose, on the average, from £3, 10s. to £7, 10s. per skin, the highest price paid being £8, 5s. In the following year, though there was a much smaller catch, the seal-skin was less fashionable, and the price declined to an average of £6, 5s. At the last October sales the average price obtained was under £5, 10s. per skin.

This decline is partly due to the enormous catch of last year, which, as we said at the outset, exceeded 120,000 skins, but also to the bad state of trade, which induced people to economise rather than to indulge in costly furs. Last year's catch, however, was greatly under that of 1887, in which year upwards of 226,000 seal-skins were sent to market. The principal outlets for seal-skins are the United States and Great Britain; and the best quality of seal-skin is that which is caught on the shores of Alaska.

THE LAWYER'S SECRET.*

By John K. Leys, Author of *The Lindsays*, &c.

CHAPTER XVI.—IN THE PRISONER'S CELL.

It need hardly be said that Hugh Thesiger's friends were amazed, bewildered, horrified at the news of his arrest. One of them, however, was inclined to treat the matter almost as a joke. Terence O'Neil not only scouted the idea of Hugh being guilty—as everybody did who knew him—but could not bring himself to believe that any circumstances, or any combination of circumstances, could make it appear to any reasonable man that he was guilty. The young Irishman went about everywhere abusing the crown officials as a set of noodles, who dashed at the first apparent coincidence within their reach, without stopping to consider the probabilities of the case, or the inherent absurdity of the theory they were propounding.

Terence, as it happened, was in town; but the Temple was almost deserted. Meeting one of his friends named Rawson on the day after the arrest, he seized him and compelled him to listen.

'To think that a man who is laying the foundation of a splendid practice, just beginning his career—a man with enough money and no vices—engaged to marry a rich and charming woman—a fellow whom everybody likes, and who hasn't an enemy in the world, should suddenly murder an old fogy at his own fireside, for no reason at all! It's incredible! It's absurd on the face of it!'

'That may be,' answered Rawson; 'but there are several things poor Thesiger will have to explain.'

'Why do you call him "poor Thesiger"?' cried Terence.

'Simply because he's very unfortunate. I hear they've got the lad who sold him the poison; and he was the last to see the old man alive.—It may have been only manslaughter. He may not have intended to kill Felix. There's a chance for him there.'

'A chance for him!' cried Terence, turning away in disgust.

'Or they may make it out homicide by misadventure. But there's no doubt your friend administered the poison. They found the bits of the bottle in his room.'

O'Neil started. 'How do you know?' he asked sharply.

'I've seen the papers that have been laid before counsel.'

But in a few seconds O'Neil had recovered himself. 'Of course he will explain everything,' said Terence loftily.

'Take my word for it, O'Neil, it's a serious case,' said Rawson, after a little pause. 'The police have found out'—here the speaker dropped his voice—'that Thesiger sold his railway stock yesterday morning, drew out every penny he had in the bank, and was in the act of bolting with the gold and notes in his portmanteau, when they arrested him.'

Certainly this news was enough to banish the Irishman's levity. He turned pale, and stared at his friend as if he had seen a ghost.

'I can't believe it! I don't believe it for a moment!' he cried.

'Oh, it's a fact,' returned the other. 'I'm not disclosing any secrets; for it will come out at the police court to-day.'

O'Neil was silent. He was simply confounded.

'I've no doubt Thesiger can explain it,' he said at last. 'Very likely he was going to spend the rest of the vacation abroad.—But I say, Rawson, I wish you would get me an order to see him. His only relative is a half-pay lieutenant—a dear old fellow, but quite

unfit for this sort of work. I want to instruct somebody to act for my friend.' Terence laid a slight emphasis on the last two words.

'I can't get you an order, exactly,' said Rawson; 'but I'll tell you how to set about getting one.' This he proceeded to do, adding, that it would be useless to try to see the accused man that forenoon, but that he might be admitted to the prison in the afternoon, or on the following morning.

O'Neil, on going back to his chambers, found Lieutenant Thesiger there. It was pitiful to note the brave old man's pale cheeks and quivering lips.

'What do you think, sir? Can I see him?' he asked anxiously.

Terence, forced to act and speak on his own responsibility, seemed to have added ten years to his life in twenty-four hours.

'I don't say you might not get an order of admittance,' said the young barrister; 'but if I may offer my advice, sir, I should not in your place make the attempt. I don't for a moment believe my dear friend Hugh Thesiger to be a murderer. Nobody who knew him can think that of him. I cannot believe that there is any real cause for alarm. I will see him to-day; and I will tell him you were here, and were anxious to visit him, but that I dissuaded you from carrying out your idea. I will see to instructing a first-rate solicitor to defend him. Believe me, my dear sir, for you to see him would not help him in the least, while it would distress you both very much.'

'But if my nephew is innocent—if everybody, as you tell me, thinks him innocent, why is he in prison?'

'Because of some circumstances, some things he ought to explain. No doubt he will do so. —Did you ever hear Hugh speak of this Mr Felix?'

'Never in my life. I never knew he had anything to do with him.'

'Well; suppose you go back to Chalfont, Lieutenant, and tell Mrs Thesiger that nobody in London—I may say *nobody*,' he repeated—for his voice faltered a little as he remembered Rawson's words—'believes that her nephew is guilty.'

The Lieutenant thanked his young friend and took his advice, returning to Chalfont without making any attempt to visit the prison.

As he was speaking to the old naval officer, O'Neil had been conscious of a strange catching at the throat, a restraint that he could not quite account for. The facts he had concealed from his friend's uncle seemed to recur to his mind with double force as he tried to smooth things over and make light of Hugh's danger.

Terence succeeded in obtaining an order to see Thesiger, and he resolved to use it at once. As he was leaving his chambers to go to the prison, a telegram was put into his hands. It was from Lady Boldon. She begged him to find out whether she could see Hugh if she came up to town next day. For the present, she was confined to bed and unable to travel.

Hardly knowing what reply to make to this, Terence put the message in his pocket, intending to answer it when he came back.

As O'Neil's order was one of a special character, he was shown straight to the cell in which his friend was confined. The massive door was opened; a tall figure rose up to confront the warder; and the next moment Terence was grasping Hugh Thesiger's hand. Something—the effect of the strange surroundings, the confined air, the bare white-washed walls, the window away up towards the ceiling, combined with the gravity of his friend's situation—moved the young Irishman so that for the moment he could not speak without some difficulty.

'It's awfully good of you to come,' said Hugh; 'sit down.' He pushed the solitary chair which the cell contained towards his visitor, and seated himself on the pallet-bed.

'How in the world have you got into this mess—a steady-going man like you?' said Terence at last.

'Don't joke about it, old fellow.'

'Joke about it! Heaven knows, I'm far enough from joking. I only meant that if it had been a hare-brained fellow like me that had got mixed up in a tale of this kind, there would have been less wonder. But don't think too much of it, Hugh. What is it? A few days' detention—a little unpleasantness—and something to make a story out of for the rest of your life.'

Hugh made no reply; but there was a ghost of a smile, an ugly, sarcastic, almost mocking smile about his mouth, which Terence did not like at all.

'The thing to be done,' he went on, 'is to get a thoroughly good firm of solicitors to look after you. Who shall it be? What do you say to Fox & Chislehem? Or Sharpe & Downey? Or our old Sessions friend Ferrit?'

'Thank you, old man; I hardly think any of those eminent firms would suit me.'

'Ferrit may be a trifle low, but he is remarkably shrewd and energetic. On the other hand, Sharpe & Downey are capable, and a shade more respectable. Which do you prefer?'

'I hardly know yet,' returned Hugh. 'In fact, O'Neil, I don't think I shall employ anybody.'

'Not employ a solicitor!' cried Terence in amazement. 'Thesiger, you must be mad!' and a genuine suspicion as to his friend's sanity did cross the young man's mind for a moment.

'I think,' said the prisoner slowly, 'a solicitor would be of no use to me. I know a little law; I know all the facts; I don't want anything done; I have no witnesses to call. What do I want with a solicitor?'

O'Neil was silent for a moment.

'I couldn't be in court to-day,' he said at last, 'because I had to see about getting the order to come here.'—Hugh nodded.—'But tell me this—Do you think it likely you will be—committed?'

'Certain to be.'

'Then, Hugh, old fellow, you'll let me defend you? I and—some one else perhaps, some one of good position at the criminal bar will be

there, and you can instruct us'—— He could not finish the sentence.

'"From the dock," you mean,' said Hugh, finishing it for him. 'Thank you. You're awfully good, Terence.—Yes; I have no objection—I mean, I'm exceedingly obliged to you. Only you must promise to follow the lines I lay down.'

Terence sighed, but forbore to press the matter further just then. He could not understand his friend at all.

'What did they say in court to-day—if you don't mind speaking of it?' he said after a moment's pause.

'Oh, the chemist's young man was there to prove that I bought the stuff from him'——

'But you didn't!' interrupted O'Neil eagerly.

'Yes, I did.' Thesiger, as he said this, looked his friend straight in the eyes. 'And they had an office boy, who saw me go into Mr Felix's office, and leave it.'

'But he was mistaken!'

'No; he was not mistaken. I was there.'

There was dead silence in the cell for a moment or two, and then O'Neil said, in a low constrained voice—'If I am to help to defend you—as I mean to do,' he threw in quickly—'I ought to know all that the police know, as soon as possible. There is one point that weighs heavily on my mind. Your money! Did they find you on the point of going off with all your property in your portmanteau?'

'They did!'

'What a fatal blunder! Something alarmed you; the prospect of so horrible a charge unmanned you—made you lose your head. But it was a dreadful mistake.'

'Not to have gone sooner—yes.'

'But can't you explain all this?' cried O'Neil, springing to his feet—'your buying the poison—your going to see the man at his office—your reasons for taking the alarm, though you were innocent?'

'No, Terence; I am not going to.' Hugh's voice was hardly above a whisper, but it was steady enough.

'I saw your uncle to-day,' said O'Neil abruptly.

Hugh's face changed; and for the first time since the conversation began his voice trembled, as he asked—'Is he in town still?'

'No. He wanted to come and see you; but I assured him that it would do no good, and persuaded him to go back to Chalfont.'

'Thank you, Terence. You have saved us both some unnecessary pain.'

'I am glad you think I did right. And less than an hour ago, I got a telegram from Lady Boldon asking me when she could see you.'

'What?' Hugh was on his feet in a moment, his hands clenched, his face working strangely.

'Why should you be surprised at that? It is very natural that she should wish to see you. When would you like her to come?'

'Like her to come?—Natural!' The prisoner sank down again on the bedstead, and covered his face with his hands.

O'Neil was amazed at the effect which the mere name of his betrothed had on Hugh. Then he remembered that the mention of her name would remind him, as nothing else would, of all he had lost; and he ceased to wonder.

'Shall I fix Thursday?' he asked.

'No! No! No!' cried Hugh, still keeping his hands over his face, shuddering as he spoke.—'She does not want to see me,' he said in a half-whisper; 'and I feel as if I would rather die than meet her face to face. Keep her away from me, Terence'—he sat up and grasped his friend's arm as he said this—'don't let her come near me: promise me this—promise me that you will do all you can to prevent her coming here.'

O'Neil gave the required pledge; and as he did so, something like a chill passed over him. A doubt as to his friend's innocence crossed his mind. Why should Hugh be so anxious not to meet Lady Boldon? An innocent man might wish to prevent his betrothed from coming to see him in prison, on account of the pain such a visit might cause her. But the thought of a meeting with her, in itself, would surely be a comfort, an indescribable pleasure to him? Yet Hugh seemed absolutely afraid to meet Lady Boldon face to face.

Before O'Neil could say more—before he could think what he ought to say—the opportunity for answering had passed away. The noise of the well-oiled lock, as the heavy bolt flew back, told the two men that their intercourse for that day was over.

ANCIENT EMBROIDERY AND TAPESTRY.

When Milton lived in Artillery Walk in 1670, his three daughters were boarded out, we are told, 'to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture that are proper for women to learn, particularly embroideries in gold and silver.'

For many hundreds of years before the poet's three daughters essayed to learn the art of Embroidery, this kind of needlework was held in the highest esteem in our own country; and so much excellence was attained in its execution, that the 'Opus Anglicanum,' as it was called on the Continent, was regarded with general admiration abroad. Twice there is mention of it in Domesday Book. One entry in the great survey runs to the effect that Alauid had half a hide of land granted to her by Earl Godric on the condition that she was to teach his daughter how to embroider; and the second states that a certain Leuide made embroidery for the king and queen. We may still see, too, a very large number of entries in the records of expenses of our successive monarchs in which broidery is specially mentioned, sometimes as being for their own use, and sometimes for vestments for presentations to other persons, or enrichments for various places; and, again, as ordered for devices on banners. Many pages might be filled with extracts of this kind from privy-purse expenses. The close rolls, the liberate rolls, old wills, and other documents, also enable us to see that the robes of the kings and queens, as well as those of ecclesiastics of high degree, were superbly worked with gold embroideries diversified with colours and precious stones. The names of many of the embroiderers are given in these documents, as well as the amounts paid to them for their

work. In a wardrobe account, in the time of Richard II., two embroiderers, William Sanston and Robert de Asshecombe, are written down as 'Broudatores Domini Regis.' In another place, Stephen Vyne is mentioned as being appointed chief embroiderer to Richard II. and his queen, and as having a pension granted him by Henry IV. Those who have gone over these numerous accounts systematically have noted entries relating to needlework which mention the following persons: Adam de Bakering, who was paid 6s. 8d. for silk and fringe to embroider a 'chesable' made by Mabilia of St Edmunds; Adam de Basinges, who made a cope for the king to give to the Bishop of Hereford; Thomas Cheiner, who was paid £140 for a vest of velvet embroidered with divers work for the chaplain of Edward III.; William Courtenay, who embroidered a garment for the same monarch with pelicans and tabernacles of gold; John de Colonia, who made two vests of green velvet embroidered with gold sea-sirens and the arms of England and Hainault, and a white robe worked with pearls, and a velvet robe embroidered with gold, for Queen Philippa; Rose Bureford, who received fifty marks from Queen Isabella in part payment of a hundred, for an embroidered cope; and John de Sumercote and Roger the tailor, who were ordered to make four robes of the best brocade, two for King Henry III. and two for his queen, with gold-fringe and gems, with special directions to make the tunics of softer brocade than that of the mantles and supertunics. In one of the earliest books preserved by the Corporation of London, there is a transcript of a quit claim in which there is mention of a piece of cloth eight ells long and six ells wide that Aleyse Darcy embroidered with divers works in gold and silk for the Earl of Richmond, grandson of Henry III.; and of another work of a similar description that the same embroideress executed for the Earl of Lincoln.

In our own time, when, from antiquarian curiosity, or some other reason, ancient tombs have been opened, we have come face to face with long-buried specimens of olden needlework. An instance occurred not long since in Canterbury Cathedral, when the tomb of Hubert Walter was opened. This ecclesiastic was Archbishop of Canterbury when he died in 1205. Only his bones remained when the investigation in question took place; but these lay in the vestments in which the body was interred nearly seven hundred years ago; and on these robes are various embroideries in silk and gold. The linen was found to be considerably decayed; but the amber-coloured silk on which the embroidery is worked is in fair preservation. This work consists of angels, the evangelists, and other sacred figures arranged chiefly in roundlets. In the same cathedral may also be seen another specimen of even greater interest; this is the velvet jupon (a surcoat worn over armour) of the Black Prince, which is suspended over his tomb. It is embroidered with his arms in gold. The robes of the Saxon bishop, St Cuthbert, in the library of Durham Cathedral, are also enriched with needlework.

Not only in our palaces, as in Hampton Court and Holyrood, but in many of the castles and country seats of our ancient nobility and gentry, we have many splendid specimens of Tapestry for wall-coverings, some of which were worked with the needle, and others made in the ponderous old looms of former days. In Bamborough Castle, in Northumberland, there are four very fine pieces executed with the needle, one of which is fifteen feet in length. These represent scenes in the life of the Emperor Justinian with life-sized figures, including his labours in connection with the Roman Law, his visit to the Temple of Janus, his coronation, and a hunting incident. In many instances Time has given tapestry tones in which faint blues and grays appear to predominate, on account of the deadening of the brilliance of brighter colours; but there is little loss of tint in these works. There are scarlets and browns of rich hues, and their general effect is unimpaired from this cause. We may see they were wrought in strips, and sewn together afterwards. In Chillingham Castle, in the same county, there are some grand examples in good preservation; and in Warkworth Castle there are more. In Berkeley Castle there is a great deal of this work that was so much to the dames and damsels of high degree in old times. There is tapestry in the small chamber in which Edward II. was murdered; and in the rooms once occupied by Queen Elizabeth and King James I.; and in the drawing-room, as well as in the 'haunted chamber.' Derbyshire and Warwickshire are also specially rich in these treasures; and probably every county, if called upon for exhibits, would be able to represent itself. Mythological, allegorical, and historical subjects were often chosen for these works. The four elements are also sometimes represented. At Sion House, Middlesex, there is a piece in which Fire is represented. Earth, Air, and Water are among the pieces mentioned as being in Berkeley Castle. Sacred subjects were often chosen; and the fables of Æsop, hunting scenes, and landscapes were also favourites. It will be remembered that the tapestry of silk and silver described as being in the chamber of Imogen is stated to have depicted 'the story of proud Cleopatra when she had met her Roman;' and the arras behind which Polonius hides, and so meets his death at the hands of Hamlet, is made a conspicuous feature in the representation of the play.

By Queen Anne's time, both tapestry and embroidery appear to have gone out of fashion. In the number of the 'Spectator' published on the 13th of October 1714, there is a letter calling upon the editor to recommend the long-neglected art and laudable mystery of needlework, and complaining bitterly that the time that, fifty years previously, was spent in working beds, chairs, and hangings for the family, was then thrown away upon dress, play, and visits. In compliance with this request, the 'Spectator' proceeds to express a wish that all the fine ladies of Britain, as soon as their mourning is over (for Queen Anne), would appear covered with the work of their own hands; and to point out the advantages likely to accrue from such industry. He suggests the

battle of Blenheim as a subject for tapestry, among others. He continues: 'How memorable would that matron be who shall have it subscribed upon her monument "That she wrought out the whole Bible in tapestry, and died in a good old age, after having covered three hundred yards of wall in her mansion-house."' Finally, he proposed that no young maiden whatsoever should be allowed to receive the addresses of her first lover but in a suit of her own embroidering. He contends, banteringly, that a few regulations of this kind would effectually restore the decayed art. On the following Wednesday—the 'Spectator' came out on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays—'Cleora' replied in a letter, and repudiated any obligation to continue such tedious drudgeries, which, she averred, were only fit for the Hilpas and Nilpas that lived before the Flood; and then inquired what the 'Spectator' thought of gilt leather for furniture, concluding: 'Without minding your musty lessons, I am this minute going to Paul's Churchyard to bespeak a skreen and a set of hangings; and am resolved to encourage the manufacture of my country.'

To return to ancient embroidery—the embroideries in gold and silver that John Milton thought it was proper for women to learn. The manner of executing this work appears to have been in this way: Such portions as permitted of the treatment were worked upon linen first, and then, when carefully finished, placed upon the velvet or other material it was intended to enrich, and firmly attached to it; after which a few scrolls or tendrils, or similar light touches, were added, to connect the device thus applied with the main ground, and take off any appearance of crude stiffness in the design. Thus, when John de Sumercote made the violet-coloured brocade robe for the queen of Henry III., we may assume that the six small leopards ordered to be placed on it were first wrought with gold thread on stout linen, and then cut out and transferred to the brocade, and the other enrichments subsequently added. And when John de Colonia made the beautiful robe mentioned on an Issue Roll, dated 1335, for Queen Philippa, any devices with which it was ornamented were doubtless made in the same manner, and all the pearl-work added when this was accomplished; and so, too, the pelicans William Courtenay embroidered for Edward III. were probably applied in the same way, and the gold tabernacle-work wrought afterwards. Some embroidery was executed in outline only, when it did not admit of this treatment. Cloth, linen, and silk were used for this variety of work. Scenes from the Old and New Testaments, angels, the evangelists, the apostles, the Star of Bethlehem, crowns, the sacred monogram, birds, animals, conventional fruit and foliage, were most frequently in the minds of the old embroiderers who used this method. Statues, old paintings, and miniatures in manuscripts, show us many examples of embroidered borders on robes and mantles. They are sometimes designed in set geometrical patterns, such as squares, diamonds, and circles; sometimes in scroll-like and flowing lines; and they are generally indicated as richly wrought with precious stones and seed-pearls.

The quarter-circular cope-chests preserved in some of our cathedrals—in one of which may have been deposited Queen Isabella's commission to Rose Bureford—should be noted in connection with this old-world subject.

RICHARD MAITLAND—CONSUL.

By L. T. Meade and Robert K. Douglas.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

When Richard Maitland undertook the duties of Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at the inland port of Ch'anyang, in China, he little guessed the strange adventures which would befall him, and the numerous perils to which he would be exposed. He was a man of nearly fifty years of age, a thick-set Englishman from the Midland counties. In manner he was intensely reserved; but he had a humorous twinkle in his eyes, and, when thoroughly pleased and interested in any one, a hearty and kindly manner. He was also largely endowed with tact, an essential quality for a man in his position. In consequence, he was popular with the Chinese dignitaries, and was freely admitted to their various entertainments. This popularity was destined, however, to come to an abrupt end, and the peace-loving Consul was soon to see the reverse side of the Chinese character.

On a certain sultry morning, when Maitland entered one of his private apartments in the large roomy Consulate, his valet, George Bryce, who had accompanied his master from England, approached him. He told Maitland that a young Englishman had called to see him on urgent business.

'The gentleman brought this letter of introduction,' continued Bryce, 'and begged me to give it to you, sir, the moment you were at leisure to look at it. This is his visiting-card.'

Maitland took both letter and card in his hand. When he read the name on the card, he gave a perceptible start: 'Mr James Pennant.—Surely not Lady Margaret's son,' he exclaimed half aloud. He eagerly tore open the letter. It ran as follows:

My dear Mr Maitland—If my son goes to Ch'anyang (that unpronounceable corner of the earth where you are now buried), I am sure you will do him all the kindness in your power. He has taken it into his head to visit China, in search, I suppose, of those adventures which fascinate young people in our day. For the sake of our old friendship, I am sure you will give him fatherly counsel if he comes in your way. You know that he is a somewhat important person, at least in his mother's eyes, being an only son.—With kindest regards, Yours most truly, Margaret Pennant.

When Maitland's quick eyes had devoured this letter, he looked at Bryce. 'The young Englishman turns out to be the son of an old friend,' he remarked. 'Lady Margaret Coningsby is his mother.—You remember Lady Margaret as a young lady, eh, Bryce?'

'Yes, sir, perfectly. Also her marriage to Captain Pennant, and the Captain's death soon afterwards.—I told Mr Pennant that you would most likely be able to see him after tiffin, sir. He said he would call without fail.'

'I hope he will do so. I shall be delighted to see his mother's son. Be sure you let me know the moment he arrives, Bryce.'

'Yes, sir,' replied the servant.

A Chinese 'boy' entered the room at this moment to announce that tiffin was served, and Maitland strode into his dining-hall and sat down to lunch. He was hungry, for he had gone through a hard morning's work, and while he ate, his thoughts ran on the letter he had received and the many memories it had evoked.

Maitland was unmarried. As far as he could tell, he had never wished to marry; but he knew that could he have been tempted to forego the charms of liberty for the silken cords of married life, Lady Margaret would have been the girl on whom his choice would have fallen. In the old days, she had always been in his dreams. But fate had ordained her for another, and Maitland did not even know if he regretted it. He had never lost his interest in her, however, and now he looked forward with keen anticipation to seeing her son. He had scarcely finished lunch before Bryce entered the room to say that Pennant had called.

'Tell him that I will see him immediately,' said the Consul. He started up in haste, and hurrying into his large reception-room, held out a hearty hand of greeting to the son of his old friend. 'My dear boy, how delightful this is!' he exclaimed. 'I am more than pleased to see you. I need not say that I will do all in my power to make your visit pleasant while you stay here. Of course, it goes without saying that you will put up at my house. I will send immediately for your traps, if you will tell me where they are.'

'I'm awfully obliged,' answered Pennant. The colour mounted to his temples as he spoke. He was a slightly-built, tall, young man with keen gray eyes and a well-set-up figure. There was a look of anxiety about his face, however, which Maitland perceived the moment he looked at him. 'I am greatly obliged,' he continued; 'but I am afraid that I cannot—I mean, that I ought to tell you what my business is, before we say anything more about my coming here. It is a great relief to see you. I meant to have called before; but matters of a peculiar nature have occupied me. I kept my mother's letter by me, and always looked forward to knowing you. Now I am ashamed to say I come to make your acquaintance because I am in dire distress.'

'Then you have not just arrived at Ch'anyang?'

'No; I have been here for several weeks. The fact is, I have called to-day to ask you, Mr Maitland, to give me your assistance. As British Consul here, you may be able to offer me some invaluable help. I have been unfortunate enough to get myself into a horrible mess.—But can I speak to you alone? Do any of your servants understand English?'

'Only my valet, Bryce. He knew your mother when she was a girl.—Come into my private office, Pennant. If you have anything special to say, we shall be safe there.'

Maitland led the way to his private room. He motioned his guest to a seat and sat down opposite him. 'Now,' he said, 'how can I serve you? You can command me not only in my official capacity, but also as an old friend of your mother's.'

'I have known your name all my life,' replied Pennant. 'My mother has spoken of you often—in fact, your name is a household word at home.'

'I am delighted to hear it, I am sure. Your mother and I were great friends long ago.—But now, as to your trouble.'

Maitland remained seated; but Pennant sprang up and stood near one of the large windows. The anxiety on his face became more marked. He spoke with a sort of reckless defiance. 'There is nothing for it,' he said, 'but to state the facts of the case as briefly as possible. I have engaged myself secretly to a young Chinese lady who is on the point of marriage with a countryman of her own. Her betrothal takes place to-morrow morning; and as the bridegroom is to leave immediately for Peking, the marriage is to come off in the evening. This I am resolved to prevent, at any cost, and I want you to help me.'

To say that Maitland turned a fiery red is to express but slightly the emotions which overpowered him at this startling communication. 'I wish with all my heart that you had come to see me before,' he said. 'It is a far more serious matter than you have any idea of, for an Englishman to attempt to interfere in Chinese matrimonial affairs.'

'Does that mean you won't help me?' said Pennant in agitation.

'I did not say so.—Won't you take a chair? We must talk this matter over quietly. It is impossible for me not to feel some astonishment at your most unexpected communication. Marriages between Chinese and English people are almost unknown, and you will forgive my mentioning, my dear lad, that with your expectations and'——

Pennant interrupted hastily. 'There is no use in arguing the matter now,' he said. 'The thing is done. I am desperately in love with the girl, and have engaged myself with my eyes open.'

'I can only repeat that you are undertaking a most risky business,' answered Maitland, 'and that the matter may become one of life and death.—But before we go any further, pray, tell me the name of the girl—who is her father, and how, in the name of fortune, did you get to know her? Chinese girls are never allowed to be seen out of doors or in society.'

'I am well aware of that,' said Pennant, with a faint smile. 'Nevertheless, contrary to all precedent, I have met this girl; and, in short, the position of affairs at the present moment is as I have stated it. I will tell you my story in as few words as possible. I have always been interested in the Chinese. There has been a sort of mystery about them to me—their lives have been so much a sealed book to us Europeans, that one of my great wishes from my early youth has been to travel in China and to study the ways and customs of this queer people. I know the language, and can speak it with tolerable fluency. When, therefore, I came to Ch'anyang, instead of

putting up at the "foreign settlement," I secured rooms in the "native city." I was lucky enough to make several friends—amongst them was a Chinese scholar of considerable learning of the name of Le Ming. He often invited me to visit him in the gardens at the back of his father's house. I was sitting there one evening, when I caught sight of a charming girl passing through the shrubberies; she glided quickly into a grove of trees, and Le Ming, who noticed that I had observed her, told me that she was his sister, Amethyst.'

Here Maitland started violently, and rose to his feet. 'Merciful heavens!' he exclaimed, 'you don't mean to tell me that the girl you intend to marry is Amethyst, the daughter of Le the Prefect? My dear Pennant, if this is so, it is my unfortunate duty to tell you that you must banish the idea immediately. Le is one of the most important personages in Ch'anyang. If your preposterous idea were even suspected, we should have the whole place about our ears immediately. Besides, this girl is on the eve of marriage to no less a person than Wang, son of a President of the Board of War at Peking.'

'Precisely,' said Pennant; 'and because of all these things, I am in the terrible trouble you now see me in.—But may I finish my story?'

'Certainly.' Maitland sank again into his chair. He looked hard at Pennant under his shaggy eyebrows.

'I must return to that evening,' said the young man. 'I talked a little longer with Le Ming, and presently went back to my rooms. I was just thinking of going to bed, when a servant entered and told me that a messenger had arrived who wished to see me at once on a matter of urgent business. Wondering what could possibly be the matter, I desired the person to be admitted. The man withdrew, and a moment later opened the door to admit a female figure, carefully veiled from head to foot. The servant went away and left us alone. The moment this happened, my visitor threw back her veil, and I saw, to my astonishment, that she was a young and very lovely girl. She could not have been more than sixteen years of age. I was utterly thrown off my guard. Even in England, I have never seen such beauty. The fair complexion—the brightness of the eyes—the wonderful pearly whiteness of the teeth, it would be impossible to surpass. But what upset me more than all else was the pathetic and despairing expression in the pleading young face. "What can I possibly do for you?" I said. "Why have you come to me?" I approached her side as I spoke.

"Your Excellency can help me if you will," she said. Tears sprang into her eyes. She suddenly went on her knees. "Oh, forgive my intruding," she said. "You would, if you knew my misery. Your slave's name is Amethyst. I am the unfortunate and only daughter of Prefect Le. I am so overwhelmed with misery that I can neither eat nor sleep. Will Your Excellency deign to glance down at your slave and help her?"

"A thousand times, yes," I answered. "I will do anything that man can do for you." I was completely carried away by her words and her beauty. "How can I help you?" I said.

"Your Excellency can save my life," she replied. "Let me tell you what my grief is. In an evil moment, my revered elders exchanged my natal characters with those of a man named Wang, who is the son of a President of the Board of War at Peking. I have never seen him; but oh, if report speaks true, he is cruel, bad, and ugly. On all sides I hear how wicked he is; and then he is old. I loathe the thought of being his wife. I would rather fifty times end my days at once than go through the misery of being united to him; but as our horoscopes have already been cast with favourable results, I am powerless to prevent the marriage, unless Your Excellency will come to my aid. Some evenings ago I heard my brother Ming speak of you. He praised you, and spoke of your learning and your goodness. I determined to see for myself what you were like. I have watched you several times, unseen by you, and have recognised that your face is like that of a god from the Palace of the Queen-mother of the West. I longed to serve you, and only ask to be allowed to attend to your wants. Will you help me?"

"I will do anything in my power for you—only tell me how," I replied.

"Let me enter your Palace, and so escape from Wang. I know that you are good, and that your heart is as clear as crystal. You are still in the spring-time of life, and although you are a stranger from an outside kingdom, I long to be your wife." She suddenly clasped both my hands in hers, whilst tears streamed from her eyes.'

'Well,' said Maitland, 'and what did you do? What did you say finally to the poor girl?'

'I told her that I would help her. In short, I—— Yes, it is true—I fell in love with her at first sight. The idea of such a marriage may seem strange and preposterous to you; but it did not appear so to me when I looked at her speaking face and listened to her miserable words.—Perhaps you do not believe in love at first sight. I am a proof of the fact. I promised Amethyst to do all that she desired. I told her that I would marry her and take her to England. She left me after a time, and returned to her father's Yamun in the company of her nurse, who had brought her to see me. That happened ten days ago,' continued Pennant. 'We have met two or three times since, and all the preliminary arrangements for our elopement were completed, when this morning the nurse brought me news of to-morrow's terrible programme. I have written to Amethyst, telling her that I will rescue her from Wang at any cost.—Now you know the whole story, and what I ask at your hands.'

'It is a most unfortunate story,' said Maitland. 'I cannot possibly express to you how much it distresses me. As your mother's son, I would do anything in reason to render you assistance; but I am afraid in this matter you expect impossibilities. Besides, even if I could help you, would your mother thank me for assisting you to bring her back a Chinese daughter-in-law?'

'I cannot say,' replied Pennant. 'There is little use in going into that matter now. In short, I am past argument. I love Amethyst. She loves me. My honour is at stake. I have promised not to leave a stone unturned to help her. She trusts to me to free her from a fate worse than death. If you cannot do anything for me, I must go elsewhere.'

Maitland looked deeply annoyed. 'This is a very bad business,' he said. 'You place me in a most unpleasant position. If I refuse to render you assistance, you will probably do something rash, and find yourself in a Chinese prison before you know where you are. On the other hand, I can only consent to help you at the risk of the peace of the whole English community. I beg of you, Pennant, to think the matter over carefully before you take any further steps.'

'Good heavens! sir,' replied Pennant, 'have I not thought of it day and night, night and day, since the moment I first saw that unhappy girl? There is nothing left to reconsider. In short, I am quite prepared to risk my life, if it comes to that, in the cause of this girl. It occurred to me, in coming to you now, that you might be willing to do a small thing for me—one which can scarcely get you into serious trouble.'

'My personal trouble is nothing; but I have others to consider. Pray, tell me, however, what you mean.'

'You know Le the Prefect?'

'Yes.'

'You are probably going to the betrothal feast to-morrow?'

'I am.'

'Then take me with you, Mr Maitland—that is the favour I ask at your hands. Get me an invitation. If I go in your company, no one will suspect me of any underhand design.'

'The thought is sheer madness, Pennant.'

'Is it? Well, perhaps I am mad just now. If you will not take me, I can easily get an invitation from Le's son, Ming. But I have a fear which, I trust, has no foundation, that Ming suspects something. If he saw me in your company, his suspicions would be lulled to rest at once. May I come with you? Say Yes or No.'

'I ask you, Pennant,' said Maitland, going up to the young man and laying his hand on his shoulders—'I ask you how is it possible for me to say "Yes" after the communication you have just made me? You want to go in the company of the English Consul to Le's house. You want to share in the festivities of Wang's betrothal, and yet your real object is to steal his bride from under his nose. How can I possibly say anything but "No?" It is my first duty, my only duty, to refuse your request.'

A sudden oath escaped Pennant's white lips. 'Perhaps you are right,' he said, 'from your point of view. Nevertheless, I had hoped you would see matters in a different light. I ask for nothing at your hands but the protection of your company at a critical moment. You profess to be my mother's old friend. She told me if I were in any trouble, to appeal to you. I find myself in one of the most horrible scrapes that an Englishman ever got into, and yet you are unwilling to put out your little finger to help me. If that's friendship, preserve me from it.'

'You are upset, my dear fellow, or you would not speak so,' said Maitland—his tone changed to one of sudden emotion. 'Believe me,' he said, 'that for the sake of old times, I would give this right hand to help you; but, to speak plainly, I am without choice in the matter. As Consul here, I am in duty bound to look after the interests of the English residents, and that duty must come even before my regard for your mother and my earnest wish to serve you. As English Consul, I cannot lend my services to anything underhand.—Have I made myself plain?'

'Quite,' said Pennant—'quite plain. I can trust to your not betraying my confidence?' he added.

'I will say nothing about it, of course; but my anxiety on your account is very great. Believe me, Pennant, that with or without my help you cannot win this girl—you cannot rescue her from the inevitable fate which she shares in common with most of her countrywomen. You have no idea what invisible chains and bars surround her.'

'My honour is at stake; I have promised at any risk to do all I can for her.—I won't keep you any longer, Mr Maitland. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye, Pennant. Come to me if I can assist you in any other way.'

'There is no other way just now.'

'I cannot induce you to stay with me here?'

'No; it is safer not—my visit may compromise you. Good-bye.'

ABOUT GAMBLING SYSTEMS.

THERE are no forms of popular delusion longer lived and more difficult to kill than those that claim a pseudo-scientific basis. The man who would smile contemptuously at fortune-telling by the cards or the teacup, will probably treat astrology with respect, because he knows that some mathematical ability is requisite for the erection of a horoscope. Hundreds of really capable mechanics yearly waste valuable time and remarkable ability in pursuit of perpetual motion; and thousands of otherwise intelligent persons have implicit faith in the possibility of making wealth by Gambling on System.

The inventor of an 'absolutely infallible system' for making money at Monte Carlo is one of the most persistent and certain waiters upon the investment-seeking advertiser. A single advertisement of this character recently brought ten hundred and fifteen replies; and of this enormous number, seventy-four were from the possessors of the key to wealth viâ the gambling tables. It would be safe to assert that every man in that crowd of misguided enthusiasts honestly believed in his system; and if he had been unfortunate enough to possess capital of his own, would not have

hesitated to 'put fortune to the touch, and win or lose it all.'

This blind faith of the system-monger is a strange and marvellous thing in a sceptical, unemotional age. It is a form of insanity that has not received the attention it deserves from the student of human nature. No man is safe from its deadly infection. Its victims abound in every class; and, strangely enough, it is from the ranks of the educated that the inventor of an 'infallible' system mainly draws his disciples and supporters. Several reasons may be assigned for this otherwise paradoxical fact. In the first place, the capital and time necessary for working any system are most likely to be at the disposal of the well-to-do and presumably educated classes. Secondly, the existence and potency of gambling systems is a leading article of faith assiduously fostered by the administration of Monte Carlo. The stories of extraordinary runs of luck circulated through the medium of the subsidised continental press invariably recognise the system as the alpha and omega of successful play. Further, as all systems are based upon more or less abstruse mathematical calculations, they become invested with a weight and dignity that raises them considerably in the esteem of those who know enough mathematics to respect the science.

When once a man has been bitten by system-mania, he becomes impervious to all reason and argument that does not further his wild ambition. It is in vain one points out that the continued prosperity of the betting ring and the bank at Monte Carlo could not be reconciled with the existence of even one infallible system. Even continued and heavy losses in the attempt to break the bank do not deter the enthusiast. On the contrary, they rather confirm the theory upon which all systems are founded. Numerous though they are, they are all based upon one rudimentary principle. Their authors have accepted without demur, and with very little examination, an axiom laid down by a German authority, and generally referred to as the doctrine of the maturity of the chances. This 'doctrine' alleges that the oftener an unbroken series of events has occurred, the nearer approaches that point at which there will be a cessation or break in the run. Consequently, a player needs only to have sufficient capital to hold out while luck is against him to ensure ultimate success. This is the theory of all gambling systems, no matter how they may vary in the manner of developing it. On paper, it works out beautifully: it will even stand the test of a trial with a toy roulette and bone counters for cash. But, alas, the dazzling light of the gambling saloon and the whirl of the genuine ivory ball prove too much for the system, as thousands of experimenters can yearly testify.

'This little place has been built on systems,' was the sententious remark of the founder of Monte Carlo, M. Blanc, when questioned as to his faith in their efficacy. It is also told of this same excellent authority that he was once tempted to give a trial to a system which, like many such, had been enjoying a temporary run of luck. When he had lost sixty thousand francs in attempting to win sufficient to purchase Madame Blanc a parasol, the old gentleman expressed his readiness to sleep placidly for the rest of his life, no matter how many systematicians might plot his ruin. These and a thousand other equally authoritative guarantees as to the impregnability of the bank at Monte Carlo are well known to probably every man who has devoted any thought to the subject. But to all of them the victim of a system has one stereotyped reply: 'Their systems may have failed; mine, cannot'—an assertion that cannot well be disproved without the practical experiment which the sanguine inventor invites the sceptic to undertake.

The number of apparently sane persons who are led away by the plausibility and persistency of the system-monger is surprising. Hardly a week passes without a new system being exploited at the tables, at the expense of some victim of his own greed, and the persuasive eloquence of some English or Levantine inventor. The latter are prolific authors of systems. One of the fraternity has for twenty years past been experimenting with various methods of his own design. He spends his summers in finding backers, and the winter in convincing them of their folly. Yet the old gentleman is perfectly honest and sincere, despite his twenty years of failure. Nothing can shake his firm belief that some day he will exhaust the unlucky chances, and make a tremendous *coup* that will compensate for long years of waiting.

Of course it would be almost miraculous if fortune did not now and then smile upon these devoted worshippers. When she does, the system gets a powerful testimonial, and its author is a hero for twenty-four hours. Numerous stories are told of the luck that has attended some bold systematician whose theories were confirmed at a single sitting. But, as Lord Bacon observes of dreams, men note only those that hit, taking no record of the greater number that miss.

There is another circumstance which these dreamers of a royal road to wealth seem to ignore in a most unaccountable manner—that is, the autocratic power possessed by the administration at Monte Carlo by which they render nugatory any attempt to get the better of the bank. If it were permissible for a player to double or increase his stake to an unlimited extent, the doctrine of the maturity of the chances would work out satisfactorily, just as one could make certain of winning at tossing a coin if it were possible to go on doubling with every loss. But the powers that be have carefully protected themselves against this contingency by making a rule that no stake shall exceed six thousand francs. How effective a bar against following up and recouping a loss this rule is, will be realised when it is seen that, even beginning with five francs, the smallest stake permissible, twelve doublings will have exhausted this maximum; yet to carry out any system, it is often necessary to double a stake fifteen or twenty times! This is the rock on which all gambling systems come to grief; and until the administration are foolish enough to abandon this impregnable position, the infallible system must be relegated to the limbo of

such chimeras as perpetual motion and the philosopher's stone.

The paragraphic reports of the enormous winnings of certain players at the tables during the season undoubtedly effect their object, and attract many persons whose credulity and greed are of a pronounced type. It is an open secret that these decoy paragraphs are based on very slight material. A win of ten thousand francs —no great sum—is magnified into one hundred thousand, and the story wired to the various subsidised journals, whence it is copied into respectable papers in England and on the Continent. The writer was a frequent looker-on at the tables a few seasons since, when the European press was recounting the phenomenal luck of certain 'visitors.' They are never referred to as 'players' or 'gamblers' in these official paragraphs—but the most searching inquiries on the spot failed to unearth the alleged fortunate ones. This is no unusual experience. 'Visitors' who have varied a monotonous run of ill luck by winning one or two thousand francs at a sitting, which probably still leaves their balance on the wrong side, have been astounded and amused by finding themselves on their return home the heroes of a bank-breaking episode. One victim of the rapacious roulette table having written home for funds to enable him to leave Nice, received, in lieu of the expected remittance, a paragraph from a London paper in which he was congratulated on having twice won twenty thousand francs at a sitting! As a general rule, the writers of these mendacious paragraphs avoid indicating the supposititious winner too clearly, as inquiries might and do occasionally reveal the fraud. The more usual way is to select some commonplace name, certain to be found upon some hotel register at Nice or Mentone, leaving the public to fit the cap. More than once, some daring rascal—and they are of the choicest brand in the Riviera during the season—bearing the name of one of these fictitious bank-breakers, has turned his temporary fame to good account by taking advantage of that strange propensity of humanity for offering tribute at the shrine of success. One such adventurer actually married a wealthy widow on the strength of the reputation made for him by the press; another found no difficulty in inducing several simpletons in London to advance him some hundreds of pounds to enable him to carry out a gigantic campaign against the bank. Needless to say, he was far too shrewd to risk money so recklessly, and Monte Carlo knew him no more.

For various reasons, systematic gambling finds little favour with people who bet on horse-races. Now and then, one hears vague rumours of a marvellous win which is attributed to the agency of some 'infallible' system; but the lucky author apparently rests satisfied on his laurels, for he is never heard of again. The sporting authorities, too, are addicted to scoffing at systems and their inventors. The average betting-man is not likely to be impressed by the doctrine of the maturity of the chances, even if he could understand it, for he is perfectly satisfied that the only royal road to success on the turf is by way of special and exclusive information from headquarters, commonly known as the 'straight tip,' a snare and delusion even more deadly than the 'infallible system,' because its victims are more numerous, widespread, and gullible.

A COUNTRY COQUETTE.

By G. B. Burgin.

I.

Jonas Crump, whilom agriculturist, was a very unhappy man, for Fate had mocked him with the resemblance of the felicity he had cast away—cast away in a mood which savoured of intemperate desperation, rather than the deliberation which usually characterised his movements. But there had been a lady in the case, Sarah Jane Milliken of the Big House; and Sarah Jane Milliken, with the proverbial waywardness of her sex, affected to despise a mere son of the soil like Jonas Crump. In fact, Jonas, though a handsome young man, was rather addicted to carrying a good deal of mother-earth about his person, especially when he had just been through the fields devoted to the wholesome and succulent vegetable which he called 'tunnips.' Consequently, a quarrel arose between the lovers, and Jonas Crump, in a fit of anger, had wiped his huge feet on the mat at the entrance to Sarah Jane Milliken's kitchen, vowing that he would never darken her doors again. They were not in reality Sarah Jane's doors at all, but belonged to Squire Ancaster, whose cook she was. Sarah Jane, however, invariably spoke of the kitchen as 'her kitchen,' and gradually came to believe that she owned it. When the Squire required an extra good dinner from his pretty cook, he was apt to foster this delusion of Sarah Jane's by giving her *carte blanche*.

When Jonas had shaken the mud from off his feet on the mat, Sarah Jane scornfully swept it into a dustpan and threw it after her departing swain. 'He'll be back in the morning,' she said merrily, as she surveyed her own plump, pretty face in the glass—'he'll be back in the morning; and if he isn't, there's always Joe Pigskin, the butcher's man, though he's not nearly such a handsome fellow as Jonas. If I can't plague the man a little now, goodness knows I shall never get a chance after we're once married.'

But the next morning, when Joe Pigskin brought the meat up to the Big House, he did so with an air of limp dejection which did not escape Sarah Jane's penetrating eye. She was eager to ask him what was the matter. This was the more easily accomplished as he lingered about the kitchen door with an elaborate affectation of not having anything particular to say, which did not impose upon Sarah Jane for a moment.

'What's the matter, man?' asked Sarah Jane tartly. 'Have you seen anything of that good-for-nothing fellow Jonas?'

'Have I seed summat of him?' retorted Joe, rubbing himself ruefully, and moving towards the cart with a limp slackness utterly unlike his usually brisk movements. 'Have I seed summat of him? I've seed summat of him,

and felt summat of him too. He's left me a stiff body all over, drat him!'

Sarah Jane was pleased. 'I've always told you two men I wouldn't have you fighting about me,' she said with great decision. 'You know I'm not worth it.'

'I know you ain't,' retorted the ungallant Joe, slowly preparing to get into his cart. 'I know you ain't; but I warn't going to say so when another man comes up to me and says'——

'Yes, yes. What did he say?' eagerly inquired Sarah Jane.

'Oh, he comes up mild and gennelmun-like, and says: "Joe," he says—"Joe, you lopsided varmint, I'm going to London to make a fortune. If you get casting sheep's eyes on my sweetheart, I'll break every bone in your body—danged if I won't," he says softly, but with a look in his eye which were main nasty.—"Who be you to come a-dictatoring to Joe Pigskin?" says I. "You've mistook your man," I says.—"Don't let's argify about it," he says quietly; "let's settle it peaceable-like, and part friends."—Like a fool, I made no dejection. Best out of three falls. I'm 'lowed to be the best wrastler round; but he just grabbed my ribs and 'gan to squeeze till I felt 'em nearly crack.—"Joe," he says, still soft and pleasant-like—"Joe, have you had enough?"—"I hain't," says I; so he gives me another hug till I felt a'most bust.—"Ain't made up your mind yet?" he asks, just as if he was a-wanting me to pass him a mug of beer.—I got him by the slack of his britches and tried to throw him over my shoulder; but he jest picks me up after squeezing me till I nearly blubbered.—"Joe," he says, real friendly-like and concerned—"Joe, you obstinit, pig-sticking varmint, if you don't give in peaceable, I'm really afeered I'll have to try main force," says he.—"Try your main force," I says, and'——

'Well?' inquired Sarah Jane, with breathless interest.

'He just heaved me into the horse-pond,' responded Joe, mounting the shaft, with a groan.

'And then?'

'When I comed out half-drownded, he heaved me in agin.'

'Was that all?' inquired Sarah Jane disappointedly.

'No, it warn't all, Mistress Milliken,' said Joe, doggedly gathering up the reins and preparing to move on. 'It warn't all—not by a long sight. He kept on a-heaving till I give in. Did it all so quiet-like, too.—Then we had some beer, and parted friends.'

'Parted! Has he really gone?' And the roses faded from her cheeks.

'Gone to London. And he ain't coming back never no more, Mistress Milliken, so put that in your pipe and smoke it,' said Joe surlily.

But Sarah Jane laid a shapely hand on the shaft of the cart. 'Joe, dear Joe,' she said in a frightened whisper, 'you don't mean he's gone?'

'That's jest what I do mean,' said Joe.

'Joe'—and Sarah Jane's voice was very winning—'Joe, would you do me a favour? I—I—you know how much I've always looked up to your bravery, Joe.'

'It's nat'ral to me to be brave,' said Joe, partly appeased. 'Most men would have given in to him, spacially when he was so quiet-like; but quiet uns or noisy uns, it be all the same to a brave man like me.'

'Yes; I know, Joe. Let me get you a glass of beer. You must want some refreshment, after what you have had to put up with for my sake.' She brought a foaming tankard of ale, and he drank deep.

'What might you be wanting, Mistress Milliken?' he asked. 'What might you be wanting? Anything in reason, but no more sweet-heartin'. I'm a brave man, but my ribs won't stand it a second time. 'Sides, there's a cook over at Highbotham Manor I've got my eye on. She's been looking at me for some time past, and I couldn't make up my mind atween you. Now, brave as I be, I'm going to take her on; no more horse-ponds unexpected-like for me. I be main sorry, but Joe says he'll murder any one who looks at ye.'

'Do you mean to say,' asked Sarah Jane, 'you daren't keep company with me, not if I asked you?'

'Prezakerly,' said Joe, and drove rapidly away, lest Sarah Jane's beauty should tempt him to encounter another ducking for her sake.

II.

The chestnuts were just coming into leaf when Jonas Crump reached London, with five pounds in his pocket, a second-hand watch more noted for its eccentricities than sterling value, an old green deal box containing his Sunday clothes, and a heart hot with anger against Sarah Jane. Once he was on the verge of enlisting; on another occasion, he narrowly missed an appointment in the metropolitan police. Pound by pound his money went. Occasional jobs at the docks helped him a little, but his country speech and manner were against him. Then he pawned the watch and the best clothes and sold his green box; but all in vain. One fine morning he found himself leaning, penniless and ragged, without even a pipe of tobacco, against a flourishing drug shop in the Strand. When the proprietor came down to business, he was about to use rough language to Jonas, but suddenly appeared to be seized with an idea, and did not. This was wisdom on his part, for a hungry man generally resents abuse from a full-stomached one; and Jonas was very hungry indeed: he had not tasted food for twenty-four hours.

'Come in here,' said Mr Gedge, the owner of the shop; 'I want to ask you a few questions, my lad. Are you open for a job?'

Jonas, with a slight touch of country humour, intimated that as a preliminary, in case the negotiation came to naught, he would be glad to consider himself open to a breakfast in the first instance.

Mr Gedge nodded, not ill pleased. 'Quite so—quite so. I like the look of you. Now, what do you think of me, eh?'

Jonas looked at Mr Gedge, and hesitated. Prudence bade him not say exactly what he thought whilst gazing at Mr Gedge's ample

form. 'You be a rosy un, sir,' he said, with a rustic bow.

'Yes, "I be a rosy un,"' said Mr Gedge. 'Of course, I be a rosy un, as you say in your expressive vernacular. But I think you'll be useful. Come into the parlour at the back of the shop, and I'll send the boy for your breakfast.'

Jonas followed Mr Gedge into the shop, and hungrily awaited the return of the boy. Presently that youthful messenger returned with a large cup of coffee and four slices of bread and butter. Mr Gedge delicately turned his head away for a minute. When he looked round again, Jonas sat wistfully regarding the empty plate and cup.

Mr Gedge rang the bell. 'Boy, another breakfast.'

Jonas looked his thanks, and despatched the second supply.

'Sure you couldn't do with another?' asked Mr Gedge. Then, without waiting for an answer: 'Boy, run over to the Aërated Bread shop and bring a small loaf and some butter.'

Jonas finished the meal at last. 'Now,' said Mr Gedge, 'have a smoke? Here's a cigar. I haven't any pipes or other tobacco.'

Jonas looked up apologetically at his benefactor. 'If you don't mind, sir, I'll cut it up and smoke it.'

It was a fourpenny cigar, and Mr Gedge hesitated. 'Oh, very well,' he said. 'If you aren't used to cigars, perhaps you'll get more out of it that way.'

He sat down on the sofa and watched Jonas light his pipe, even supplying the match necessary to light it. When the pipe was fairly going, Jonas gave a deep breath of enjoyment. 'I ain't had a smoke for a week. My! but it's real good, sir,' he said. 'Now, I'm ready to work off this;' and he made a comprehensive sweep of his arm in the direction of the breakfasts which he had consumed.

'Better digest them first,' said Mr Gedge, who had taken a liking to Jonas. 'When you've done that, we'll come to business.—Ever hear of Gedge's Dandelion Pills?' asked Mr Gedge presently.

'Can't say as I have, sir,' answered Jonas respectfully. He liked Mr Gedge in his turn, and felt that something had happened which would prevent his returning, a humiliated scarecrow, to Ancaster. His heart was still hot and sore against Sarah Jane Milliken. Perhaps this London gentleman would smarten him up and make a man of him.

'Well, they're wonderful things,' said Mr Gedge, with an air of intense conviction. 'Powerful, yet as mild as a pet lamb; they'd build up the constitution of a brick wall if it felt shaky.'

Jonas had a vague idea that Mr Gedge intended to make him swallow a box on the spot, and began to experience grave misgivings as to whether politeness compelled him to take them without demur. Mr Gedge's next remark made him wonder what was coming. 'What's your height, my man? Six feet?'

'Six foot one,' said Jonas proudly.

'Ah, I expect you've shrunk an inch since you've come to town,' said Mr Gedge sharply. 'Now, look here. I've watched you hanging about for a day or two trying to get work, and I think you're an honest man. I want an honest man to help me in my business. If you'll give me your word to behave yourself, you shall have a pound a week to begin with, and wear a handsome suit of clothes.'

Jonas could not believe it. In his excitement, he relapsed into country idioms. 'I bain't agoin' to sell myself to the Old Un?' he asked apprehensively.

Mr Gedge laughed. 'You said I was the "Rosy Un" just now. I don't look much like the devil, do I?'

Jonas was compelled to admit that Mr Gedge had nothing particularly Mephistophelian in his appearance. 'As long as it's honest, I'll be only too thankful,' he said.

'And as long as you're honest, I'll be only too thankful too,' answered Mr Gedge heartily. 'My last man used to get drunk, and throw away the samples at the boys when they jeered him.'

'I don't understand,' said Jonas.

'Well, I'll explain,' continued Mr Gedge. 'Gedge's Dandelion Pills want pushing to become famous. They're supposed to be a pure, wholesome, country medicine, and I want a man to stand at the shop door to give away samples. I want a healthy, clean-looking country lad to give them away; and he'll have to be dressed like a sporting Squire of the good old times. Curly-brimmed hat's there' (he pointed to one nail), 'flowered waistcoat and cravat there' (he pointed to another), 'cord breeches and top boots there' (he pointed to yet another nail); 'and' (taking it from a cupboard) 'here is a bunch of seals for your fob. Now, the first thing for you to do is to have a bath, get shaved, and begin to fill out. If the waistcoat's a bit too big for the present, shove an old *Telegraph* up it, and another down your back. By the time you've got your flesh back, you'll be quite used to 'em. The last man didn't look like a countryman. He got "run in" for picking pockets, which brought discredit on the pills, though it was a good advertisement. I want some one who'll be square and steady, and he'll never regret it.—Just give me a reference, and then go off to the garret and sleep till dinner-time. Then I'll show you how to roll pills. When it rains, you can come in and help the others. We sell hundreds of boxes in a day.'

There was a lump in Jonas's throat as he murmured Squire Ancaster's address. But he was too worn out with sorrow and suffering to utter more than a few words of thanks, as he followed a boy up to the garret with the step of a man on the verge of breaking down.

III.

'Oh, if you please, sir,' said Sarah Jane to the Squire, and burst into tears.

'What's the matter now?' asked the Squire. He was returning from the kennels, and in a good-humour with every one. 'Heard any news of Jonas?'

'N-n-no, sir; that's what's the matter. Since

he's got this wonderful place in London, he won't come near me.'

'That's bad,' said the Squire.

'Yes. Before he went, he frightened off every one else,' added Sarah Jane with a fresh burst of tears.

'That's worse,' said the Squire. 'But I can't do anything. I expect you made his life a burden to him, and so he cleared out. A fine young fellow like that wouldn't stand all your airs and nonsense, though you are a pretty girl. I expect half-a-dozen sweethearts are already running after him. Ask your mistress to give you his address, and you can write to him, if you want to.'

When Sarah Jane asked her mistress for Jonas's address, she also begged a couple of days' holiday. 'I've a married sister in London town, ma'am, and could stay there for the night. If you don't mind, I'd like to take her a few fresh eggs and some butter and gillyflowers. I hear there's nothing of that kind to be had there fresh. I should like to see something of the world before I settle down, ma'am.'

Laden with country produce and a box containing her best hat, Sarah Jane was driven down to Ancaster Station in the dogcart by a groom the next morning. The groom was not very colloquial, being under the impression that Jonas knew all that was going on in the place, and would some day exact a strict account of this drive; but Sarah Jane looked so pretty, that once or twice he resolved to risk a kiss. However, something in her preoccupied manner deterred him, and he watched the girl step into a third-class carriage with a feeling of relief.

Sarah Jane's heart sank when she reached King's Cross Station. It was all so noisy and gloomy and dirty, so different from what she had expected, that her first feeling was one of compassion for people who were condemned to live in such a place. She inwardly resolved that her own stay there should be of the briefest. The 'bus conductor, however, was so civil, and took such an interest in this rustic coquette, that Sarah Jane's disagreeable impressions insensibly became modified. Her sister lived in a little street leading out of the Gray's Inn Road—a street mainly devoted to cab proprietors, whose vehicles went rattling up and down it every moment. Close to her sister's house, two or three drunken-looking London fowls scratched away at a straw heap with a faint, rakish, devil-may-care pretence of expecting to find worms in it. Their feathers were dropping out; they were soot-begrimed, unkempt; and one rooster crowed in a harsh, raucous way, which suggested that he had been a chronic sufferer from asthma for many years.

Before Sarah Jane recovered from the shock caused by these ungainly fowl, her sister came, open-armed, to the door. 'My!' she said, when the first excitement had subsided, 'who'd live anywhere but in the country, Sarah Jane! Don't you ever come to town again; you're just as pretty as a picture.—What's put it into your head to come and see us now? Will won't be in till twelve. Come into the best room, and tell me all about it.'

Sarah Jane took off her second-best hat and laid it carefully on the sofa. 'I've come to see my young man, to give him a piece of my mind,' she said decidedly. 'He's in a place called the Strand. Is it far from here, Milly?'

'No,' said Mrs Smallpage. 'You can walk it in twenty minutes easy. After dinner, you can easily find your way there. The place you want ain't far from the law courts.'

Thus it was that about five o'clock that evening as Jonas, decked with gorgeous raiment, stood in front of Mr Gedge's shop, he became aware of a rosy-cheeked country girl doing her best to get under the wheels of an omnibus. Instinctively, and with an alertness induced by his surroundings, the young fellow made a grab at her, hauled her from under the horses' nose, and proceeded to carry the half-fainting girl into the shop.

'Take her into the little room at the back and give her some smelling-salts,' said Mr Gedge pleasantly. 'Best thing that could have happened for the pills. We'll have it headed "Gallant Rescue" in all the papers to-morrow morning.'

Jonas shyly laid his burden down on the sofa, and re-entered the shop for the salts. Was it Sarah Jane herself? or only some one very like her? He came reeling back with the salts in a half-dazed condition, not knowing what to say.

Sarah Jane sat up as cool as the proverbial cucumber. 'How do you do, Mr Crump?' she asked, as if they had parted yesterday. 'I didn't know you'd taken some of the Squire's things with you.' She paused with a malicious smile on her lips, and apparently not at all grateful to Jonas for his recent exertions on her behalf. 'I've come to town to have a little plain talk with you.'

Jonas stood looking at her, unable to utter a word. Sarah Jane's colour began to rise beneath his searching gaze. Her lip trembled for a moment. 'I want to know, Mr Crump,' she said sternly, 'what you mean by threatening to murder all the young men round Ancaster if they speak to me? I didn't know you were such a bully.'

But Jonas still stood gazing at her, his tongue glued to his teeth.

'I've come up for you to beg my pardon,' continued Sarah Jane spitefully; 'and I don't stir from this place till you do it.'

'It's like a dream from heaven,' said Jonas, putting out his hand as if afraid to touch her. 'It's like a dream from heaven.'

Sarah Jane never afterwards properly explained her sudden surrender, but the next moment she had flung herself into his arms, weeping as if her heart would break. 'I-I-I-d-did—n't mean to drive you away, Jonas. Dear, dear Jonas, I d-d-d—didn't m-m-m-ean it.'

'What's all this?' asked Mr Gedge, bustling in. 'Aren't you ashamed of yourself, young woman?'

'No, sir,' explained Sarah Jane, laughing and crying by turns. 'I've come all the way from Ancaster to fetch him back.'

'Most unbusiness-like,' said Mr Gedge; but the little coquette coaxed him so successfully, that he consented to let Jonas return a fort-

night later. During Jonas's last fortnight in town, the papers made much of him; the fame of Gedge's Dandelion Pills was noised abroad throughout the length and breadth of the land. 'It was mighty providential,' slow-witted Jonas said to Sarah Jane as they started for their honeymoon—'it was mighty providential I happened to be looking when you got in front of the 'bus that day you came to London. Mighty providential!'

Sarah Jane smiled an inscrutable smile, and toyed with the strings of her smart little bonnet. 'Why, you "gert doock-waddler,"' she said—borrowing a well-known country phrase to adequately express her meaning—'I saw you standing outside the shop, and did it on purpose, because I didn't want you to think I'd come after you.'

RAPID COALING BY MACHINERY.

A NEW system of Coaling vessels has recently been perfected, which, in view of the success attained and the expeditious manner of working adopted, merits some passing comment. No one who has witnessed the singularly primitive modes of 'bunkering' coal hitherto in vogue, in which the fuel is transferred from the barge to the steamer by manual labour, will wonder that efforts have been made from time to time, not only to carry out the work more expeditiously, but also to perform it in such a manner that the fearful dust raised, blackening and begriming everything, may be obviated. Hitherto, however, every attempt to supersede this primitive method has failed to secure for itself a footing in shipping circles, and coal-porters continue to hoist and carry coal in baskets from the lighter, and pitch them into the 'bunker' opening on board the vessel in the same manner as when the first steamer made her trial trip.

Much interest has accordingly been excited in the methods recently perfected by Mr Paul, by which coal can be transferred from barges or lighters to steamers by a system at once rapid, cleanly, and economical. Without needlessly dwelling on the minutiæ of the new system, it may be pointed out that the mode adopted consists in the employment of a specially constructed barge, which is furnished with an endless conveyer, or 'Jacob's ladder,' traversing the entire length fore and aft. At the bow, the conveyer is furnished with hinges, and, by means of a derrick crane, is capable of adjustment to any desired height. The conveyer, which is composed of a steel chain, forms an endless vertebrated trough, and is actuated by a steam-engine placed in the stern, the necessary gearing being provided. To prevent the escape of dust into the atmosphere, a closed shoot is provided from the derrick-head—where the creation of dust commences—down to the bunkers. By this means the dust-nuisance is altogether obviated.

A demonstration of the new system, held recently at the Clyde Dock, Rotherhithe, with a barge containing one hundred and twenty tons of coal, demonstrated the fact that the entire cargo could be transferred to a lighter in one hour and fifteen minutes, or at the rate of nearly one hundred tons per hour. This is remarkably quick work, when it is remembered that the ordinary rate of bunkering coal by manual labour from a single barge is about eighty tons per diem.

In connection with the handling of the new rapid coaling-barge, it may here be noted that its inventor states that all the labour requisite in the management and working of a two hundred ton barge is four men, and a driver for the donkey engine. The barges can of course be built to any size required, but the average dimensions will in all likelihood be those to carry two hundred and fifty tons burden.

In addition to the trials already mentioned, the new barge has been employed in coaling up the Peninsular and Oriental steamer *Paramatta* and the Swedish screw steamer *Harold*.

How vast a field is open to the new invention may be judged from the fact that the official Customs returns show that an aggregate amount of eight millions of tons of bunker coal is shipped annually at British ports for the use of steamers engaged in the foreign trade. Six million tons of sea-borne coal are, moreover, brought every year to London, and eight millions to other parts of the United Kingdom in the same period; whilst a considerable portion of this is transferred by lighters to wharfs, warehouses, &c. These figures speak for themselves, and abundantly emphasise the value to all parties concerned of any method of coaling vessels which is more expeditious, more cleanly, and more economical than that at present in vogue.

The bunkering of coal seems likely ere long to furnish another of the long list of instances in which hand-labour has given place to the ever extending mechanical appliances which are met with at every turn, and in every industry and business, at the present day.

SUMMER'S SLEEP.

WHAT though cold Winter 's here,
And woods are bleak and drear,
Their naked branches pierce the leaden sky;
What though the birds have fled,
And Summer's flowers are dead,
Their rain-bruised blossoms all forgotten lie.

Though winds may mourn and rave,
Skies weep o'er Summer's grave,
Or drape it with a robe of snowy white,
Nature but lies at rest,
On sleep's life-giving breast,
Till Spring's bright dawn dispels dark Winter's night.

And so the heart that lies
Fettered by grief, shall rise
To love and life by time's consoling hand;
Love's flowers again shall bloom,
And life its joys resume,
With Summer in the heart and o'er the land.

W. F. D.

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